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LETTER DATED 23 FEBRUARY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dated 22 February 1996 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council

(Signed) PAK Gil Yon
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

96-04270 (E) 260296 270296

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Annex

Statement by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dated 22 February 1996

It is going to be two years since the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed the establishment of a new peace mechanism that would replace the outdated armistice system.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made this proposal in consideration of the failure of the existing armistice system to play any role in stabilizing the situation, preventing arms build-up and obviating the danger of another war on the Korean peninsula, and from its sincere desire to establish a new security arrangement in the post-cold war era and furthermore to achieve peace and security in North-East Asia.

Over the years, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been consistent and sincere in its efforts to provide conditions for the establishment of a new system for everlasting peace and has repeatedly taken a number of practical steps to this end in the spirit of sincerity and patience. The efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have elicited the well-deserved support of and responses from the international community.

Despite its direct responsibility for peace on the Korean peninsula, the United States, however, has refused to respond actively to the reasonable proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea even after the signing of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework, but has remained unchanged in pursuit of its policy of strength and has continued its military threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

At present, the United States continues to ship into south Korea a massive quantity of high-tech military hardware and operational equipment and stages war exercises in the sky, on the ground and on the sea almost every day all along the Military Demarcation Line to overpower the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at one stroke.

The United States is becoming more undisguised in its moves to build up a "tripartite military alliance" with Japan and south Korea, and moves forward on a full scale with the reintroduction of its cold war era policy to the Korean peninsula and its vicinity, by repeatedly launching joint military exercises among the United States, south Korea and Japan over the so-called "north Korea's threat".

The south Korean authorities, in support of the United States policy of strangling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are planning to hold a number of war games on an unprecedented scale one after another throughout 1996 in place of the "Team Spirit" joint military exercises, and have already entered into a substantial stage of actions early this year.

This has further aggravated the tension on the Korean peninsula, which still remains one of the world's hot spots, and there prevails a highly touch-and-go situation, which counts down before another war breaks out.

It is only the patient and peace-loving policy and self-restraint exercised by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that have helped maintain the armistice status and peace on the Korean peninsula even in the current situation.

The United States, which has the real decision-making power on security in south Korea, will, as a matter of course, have to be sober-minded in its judgement of the developments on the Korean peninsula running counter to the contemporary trends towards détente and peace.

It is now obvious to everyone that the 43-year-old armistice system is no longer capable of fulfilling its mission of maintaining security on the Korean peninsula.

As a matter of fact, the obsolete armistice system has never contributed to peace on the Korean peninsula ever since its entry into effect, and it has only served as evidence of the hostile relations that have existed between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on one hand and the United States and the United Nations on the other.

Moreover, since the unilateral steps taken by the United States have paralysed the functions of the Military Armistice Commission, the only supervisory body monitoring the implementation of the armistice agreement, the current vacuum threatening the security on the Korean peninsula will have to be filled as soon as possible.

It is an indisputable reality indeed that none other than the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are in a position to resolve all the issues related to the peace and security on the Korean peninsula, including those related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States agreements on the resolution of the nuclear issue.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, being the signatories to the Korean Armistice Agreement, bear a noble responsibility for preventing the recurrence of war on the Korean peninsula and establishing peace and security throughout the Asian-Pacific region.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its calls for the United States to conclude a peace agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a mechanism for a full, comprehensive and everlasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

However, in consideration of the Korea policy of the United States and the current status of Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea deems that at least an institutional mechanism should be in place as a matter of urgency to prevent the outbreak of any armed conflict and war on the Korean peninsula. In this context, the

Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea offers the following expanded proposal aimed at establishing a new peace mechanism.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States should sign an interim agreement in order to eliminate possible armed conflict and danger of war and to preserve the state of armistice peacefully.

The interim agreement may include issues concerning the management of the Military Demarcation Line and the Demilitarized Zone, ways of addressing the cases of armed conflict and accidents, the composition, duties and terms of reference of a joint military body, and other issues related to the maintenance of the security and order. The interim agreement shall take the place of the armistice agreement until the conclusion of a full peace agreement.

Second, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States should form and operate a Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint military body in Panmunjom for the implementation and supervision of the interim agreement, replacing the Military Armistice Commission.

Third, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States should hold negotiations at an appropriate level on the signing of the interim agreement and establishment of the proposed Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint military body.

Now that north and south Korea have already signed an agreement on non-aggression and inaugurated the north-south joint military body, this detailed proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, if realized, would bring about an epoch-making environment for détente and peace on the Korean peninsula and would also create the prerequisite for a confederal reunification of Korea.

The proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a reasonable initiative that fully meets the interests of the signatories of the Korean Armistice Agreement and of all other countries concerned.

The United States will have to respond positively to this proposal reflecting the broad-mindedness and the peace-loving position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.